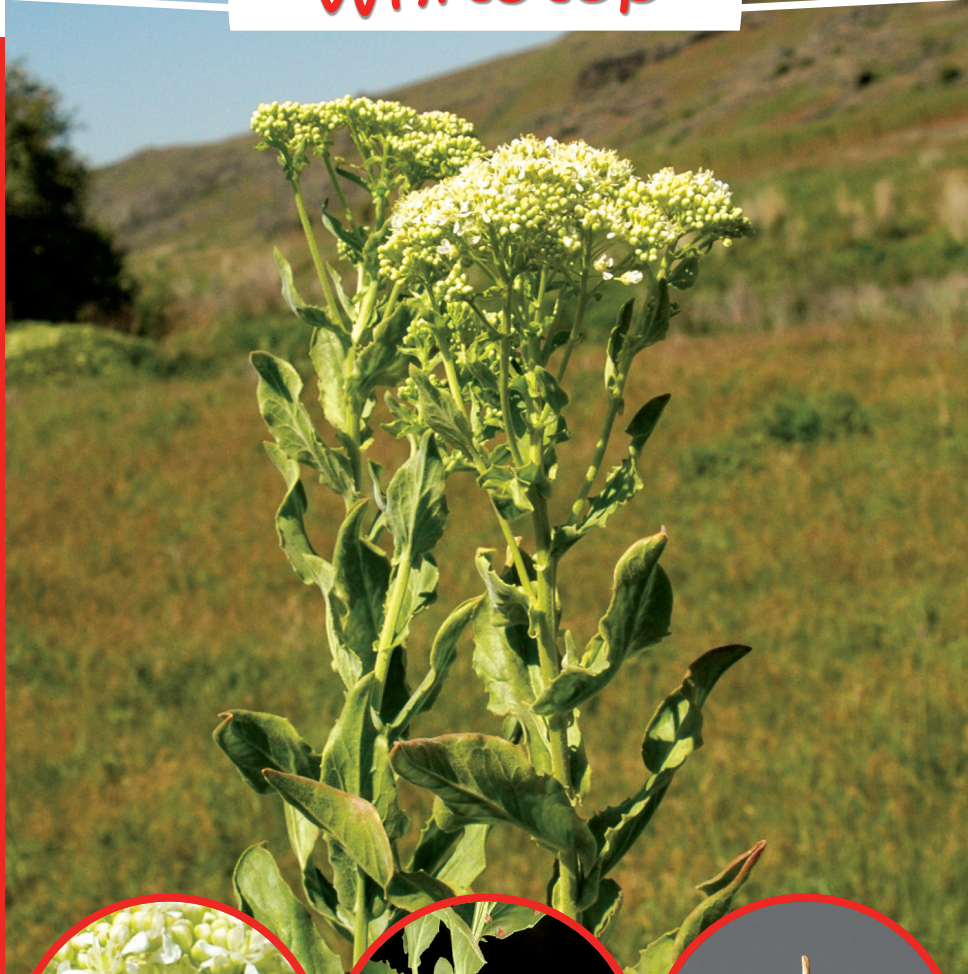




# Whitetop



flowers



leaves



fruit pod

# Whitetop

**Genus:** Cardaria

**Species:** draba

**Priority Listing:** 2B

**Perennial**

Whitetop is native to Russia and Eurasia and was accidentally introduced into the United States in contaminated crop seed in the early 1900's. Whitetop was first discovered in Gallatin County, Montana, in 1916. There are actually three different Cardaria species that are collectively referred to as "whitetop": *C. pubescens*, *C. chalapensis*, and *C. draba*.

Whitetop typically **inhabits** open, sunny areas that have been recently disturbed. These areas include over grazed pastures, waste areas, roadsides, and open grasslands.

Whitetop is a creeping perennial and can grow up to 2' in height with rhizomatous roots, which can extend 2' down and up to 12' out.

The plant is silvery gray-green in color and its leaves are lance to arrowhead shaped and covered with fine hairs. The lower leaves are stalked and the upper leaves clasp the stem. Whitetop produces numerous white flowers that have 4 petals on ½" long stalks. These dense clusters of flowers create a white, flat topped appearance.

**Germination:** is the process by which plants, fungi, and bacteria emerge from seeds and spores, and begin growth

**Inhabits:** to live in, reside in, or be present in

**Integrated Weed Management Techniques:** the combination of multiple management tools to reduce a pest population to an acceptable level while preserving the quality of existing habitat, water, and other natural resources

One plant is capable of producing 1,200 to 4,800 seeds. Seeds are produced in fruiting pods that contain 2 chambers, each capable of producing one seed. Seeds are oval in shape and reddish brown in color. Seeds can remain **viable** in the soil for up to 4 years! Seeds are scattered when the side wall of the seed pod ruptures or when the seed pods fall to the ground. Seeds can **germinate** in the fall or the spring.

Whitetop is difficult to control because it can reproduce through **rhizomes** as well as seeds.

Whitetop often requires many years of repetitive **herbicide** treatments; **integrated weed management techniques** such as hand pulling and herbicides when combined work best in controlling whitetop.



Seed photo courtesy of Julia Scher, USDA-APHIS PPQ

**Herbicide:** a chemical substance used to kill or destroy plants, likely to be used on weeds

**Perennial:** a plant whose life spans several years

**Rhizomes:** a perennial underground stem that usually grows horizontally

**Viable:** capable of growing or developing